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LEGEND OF FIN M'COOL.

SIR—Having read to one of our islanders your legend of Fin M'Cool, in the 14th number, he related to me the following:—

"Yea, Sur," said he, when I had finished reading, "yea, Sur, don't you believe that; for who ever tould it to who ever prunted it, tould it all wrong. 'Tis I have the whole sthory in its rale state in ould Irish. But that's a purty book you have. I wisht to my heart I could read it. But I suppose it cost a dale of money."

"No, indeed, Jerry," said I, "it cost only one penny."
"Oh, yea, yea, Sur, only wan pinny, an' the purty pecthurs; an' all the pinnies I spinds in tobaccay. Sure Shauneen could read it for me. Faix I'm thinkin' I'll sind to Skibbereen for some ov them; a *wonumsa* an' I I will."

"That's right, Jerry," said I, "it would be more to your credit to purchase those books for your children, than tobacco for your pipe."

"Why, Sur," said he again, "it would be worth my while to buy them if it was for nothin' else but to look at the picth *s*, an' thin light my pipe with."

"But *story*; could you not relate it in English?"

"Wisha, I could, Sur, in a sort ov English; but it wud tell a dale betther if it was titheravated up with fine words."

"Feuin M'Cool was only two years ould, when he had the misforthin' to lose his father, an' poor as his mother was afore, she was tin times poorer thin; and was obleeged to beg about the country."

"There was a sartin king, an' he heard from some ould enchanted, godly given, larned person, that there was a shild in the county that would be a greater man than himself; an' so, my dear life, he sint out to kill all the young shilders in the county. This was long ago, you know, Sur, in the ould anshint times. So the king's min went about slaying and massacraying every shild, ould an' young they came athurst. Whin Feuin's mother hard they war comin', she tould Feuin to get upon her back, an up he got, sure enough, an' away she run. He was at this time about eight years ould. His mother, poor woman, ran with him a grate way, till she got out ov breath, and could hardly stir a peg farther. Faith, I tell you, it was no joke to carry a gorsoon of a boy, for a few miles; for Feuin was the largest shild in the counthry for his age."

"Mother, a yea, sis he, 'mother, let me thry if I can carry you a spell now, for you're tired.'

"Yerra, hould your tongue shild,' says she, 'sure you're not strong enough to carry the likes ov me.'

"Ah, thin, just let me thry, mother alaih,' sis he."

"So, just in joke, she bad him thry. Whin in a minit he whips her up by the two legs, and threw her over his shoulder, and away he skelters wid hur, over ditches an' hedges, an' threnches, an' stone walls, an' bogs, an' pratie ridges, an' she dhragin' after him all the way. Whin he stopped, says he, 'now mother didn't I carry you a good spell?' But behould you, all he had ov her, was her two legs from the knees out. He began to cry thin like the rain, but it was little good for him. He was thin, poor fellow, left all alone on the world, and sauntered about the whole day; tord's evenin' he met with a fisherman, an' he tuck him in service."

"The fisherman was, at this time, seven years all to a week, fishin' for the fish ov knowledge. At the ind of the week, he catcht a finey throut. He was so tired afther gettin' no sleep for seven years, that afther he got a block an' hatchet, an' kindled a fire, he tould Feuin to brile the fish, an' if he left the sign of a burn or blister upon it, he'd take an' shop off his head. He stretched thin, by the fire's side, an' tould Feuin to *wake* him whin the fish wud be briled. So Feuin sat himself down by the fire, an' put the throut upon the coals. It roasted very well a while, till it began to feel the hate, an' a big blister was swellin' up; and Feuin thinkin' to keep it down, clapped his thumb upon it, and it burn't him; so he rams it into his mouth, whin he got the taste ov somthin' very plazin', an' knew that if he ate some ov the throut he'd get grate knowledge. Afther aten' his fill ov

the throut, for it was very large, he knew that if he wint to a place called Cnucknavean, where there was a party ov min, he would sartinly be captain over thim all. The ould fisherman was fast asleep, an' sis Feuin to himself, sis he, 'I'll *wake* you now my man, as you tould me.'—So he tuck the hatchet, an' cut off his head, an' put a sheet over him, an' lit a couple of candles, and sat up till mornin' watchin' him. He thin threw his lavins of the throut over the ditch, whin wan ov thim black rayvins came an' ate it; an' sign's by every rayven from that day to thir, is more cute than any other burd in the air. Me joker, Feuin, thin took to his heels, and wint to Cnucknavean; an' he was sich a fine robustical man, an' had sich a gift in his thumb, that in the coorse ov time he was made captain over them all. An' that's my sthory, Sur, of Feuin M'Cool"—And I hope, Mr. Editor, you like it.

Your obedient servant,

Cape Clear, County Cork.

A SUBSCRIBER.

GLEANINGS OF NATURAL HISTORY IN IRELAND.

THE SEA PARROTT—ALICA ARCTICA.

SIR—Having lived for some time on the Skelligs rock, County Kerry, I had an opportunity of seeing throughout the whole season, all the sea birds which frequent the place. The one which is most numerous there is the puffin, of which I will endeavour to give an account.

It is termed, on account of its extreme stupidity, by the people in that part, the Colliacheen, which is in English, old woman. It is one foot from the point of the bill to the end of the tail, and the wings extended, measure from tip to tip twenty-one inches. The bill one inch and a half in length, and the same in breadth; it is in thickness about one eighth of an inch. Each mandible gradually curves till they meet in a point. The outside and greatest half of both mandibles red, the remainder of a delicate bluish lead colour. Along the base of the upper mandible, is a whitish bony substance. The mouth yellow inside. At each corner, the skin, which is loose to allow the mouth to be sufficiently expanded, assumes something the appearance of a star. The crown of the head black. The throat and cheeks are whitish. Round the neck is a ring of black; the back, upper parts of the wings, and the tail are the same colour; breast and belly white; under parts of the wings greyish; tail about one inch and a half long—fourteen feathers. Feet in the first part of the season of a bright reddish orange; but from hatching becomes paler. Two inches and a half long from the knee to the end of the middle toe. Three toes webbed, and black nails.

The puffins assemble here in April, and are noticed generally to make their first appearance on a dark or foggy morning. They collect in immense numbers, and take possession of all parts of the great and little Skelligs. The female deposits her single egg in a hole, or under a rock, on the bare ground; it is about the size of a hen's egg, white, and with pale grey spots scarcely perceptible. The young, when a week or two old, are covered with long black down; the belly a little whitish; bill and feet black. They are hatched in the end of June, or beginning of July. The feet being situated so far back, the puffin takes wing with great difficulty. They walk with a waddling awkward gait, on the whole length of the leg and foot. They are very stupid; allowing a person to approach very closely, at the same time moving the head from side to side.

This bird sits nearly upright, as no other position, except resting on the breast, would preserve the equilibrium, and if on the back part of a rock, always runs to the edge, precipitates itself down, and thus without much exertion is enabled to take wing. It can hardly raise itself from off level ground. It opposes an enemy with great courage; fighting on its back with its claws, which cut like a cat's. It also inflicts a severe bite with the bill—the strength of the jaws is astonishing. It feeds its young with sprats, which are always placed across the bill quite evenly; the heads turned one way. In the morning and evening they are more numerous than at any other time.